

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 903

By Langster

A RESOLUTION to honor The Most Reverend David R. Choby,
Bishop of Nashville, for his life of service to the
Diocese of Nashville.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should salute those venerable priests, who, through their great capacity for love, dedication of spirit, and faith in God, have enriched the lives of the people of their respective communities and who have distinguished themselves as religious and community leaders of whom we can all be proud; and

WHEREAS, Bishop David R. Choby is one such extraordinary person; his life and ministry affirm his commitment to the principles of faith, perseverance, and hard work; and

WHEREAS, born in Nashville to Raymond and Rita Choby, both now deceased, David Choby was educated at St. Patrick, St. Edward, and Cathedral Catholic elementary schools, as well as Father Ryan High School, all in Nashville; and

WHEREAS, he later studied at St. Ambrose College in Davenport, Iowa, the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., and the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas (Angelicum) in Rome, where he completed his licentiate in Canon Law; and

WHEREAS, Bishop Choby was ordained a priest of the Diocese of Nashville on September 6, 1974; following ordination, he held a variety of pastoral and administrative positions, including associate pastor at St. Joseph Parish in Madison, Tennessee, administrator of St. Ann Parish in Nashville, and three years in residence at Christ the King Parish in Nashville; and

WHEREAS, for much of his priesthood he served on the Diocesan Tribunal; the Church has a long tradition of maintaining its own legal system, called "canon law"; the Tribunal is, in effect, the "court" for that system; and

WHEREAS, Bishop Choby served on the faculty of the Pontifical College Josephinum in Columbus, Ohio, from 1984 to 1989, and has served on the seminary's board of trustees; he also completed two five-year terms on the diocese's Presbyteral Council College of Consultors; and

WHEREAS, from 1989 until his ordination as the Eleventh Bishop of Nashville, Bishop Choby served as Dean of the Northeast Deanery and Pastor of St. John Vianney Parish, where he is fondly described as, "a mentor, friend, and holy priest who loves the Church"; under his leadership, the Gallatin, Tennessee, parish dedicated a new church and opened a school, which currently has an enrollment of 160 children in pre-kindergarten through eighth grade; and

WHEREAS, the Bishop was a "good steward of faith" and leaves a legacy of wonderful opportunity for growth at St. John Vianney; his daily presence will be greatly missed by his beloved parishioners; and

WHEREAS, on November 2, 2004, the College of Consultors elected Bishop Choby to serve as the diocesan administrator following Bishop Kmiec's departure in October of 2004; in December of 2005, Pope Benedict XVI named Bishop David R. Choby to lead and shepherd the Nashville diocese; Archbishop Gabriel Montalvo, apostolic nuncio to the United States, made the announcement in Washington, D.C., on December 20, 2005; and

WHEREAS, the native Nashvillian is only the second priest of the Diocese of Nashville to be chosen as its bishop, as the others have all come from outside the diocese; Bishop Choby was ordained as the eleventh Bishop of Nashville on February 27, 2006, at the Cathedral of the Incarnation, the church of his childhood; and

WHEREAS, Bishop Choby's family roots in Middle Tennessee stretch back to the 19th century; his great-grandfather, Michael Burns, was among a group of Irish Catholics who worked on the railroad, settled in McEwen, and helped build St. Patrick's Church in McEwen; and

WHEREAS, Bishop Choby's mother, Rita Mary Burns Choby, attended St. Joseph School in Nashville and graduated from St. Cecelia in 1938, and his father, Raymond Choby, served in the South Pacific during World War II; and

WHEREAS, relatives on both sides of Bishop Choby's family followed the call to religious vocations; on his mother's side of the family, he is related to the late Father John Cain, a priest of the Diocese of Nashville; another cousin was a Mercy sister, Sister Mary Coleman, R.S.M., and two relatives were St. Cecelia Dominicans, Sister Maria Goode, O.P. and Sister Mary Agnes Burke, O.P.; Bishop Choby recently remarked, "I don't think we can emphasize enough the role of family in the life of faith"; and

WHEREAS, an important turning point in the Bishop Choby's spiritual journey occurred during one Lenten season while he was a student at Father Ryan High School; Bishop Choby recalls, "There was something about that particular Lenten season...It deepened in myself a desire for a stronger spiritual life. It was a moment very alive in God's grace inviting me to be close to him"; Bishop Choby has often spoken of the powerful example of living the faith that he saw as an altar boy while attending the old Cathedral School, where every day he would see people of faith coming to Mass and receiving Communion; and

WHEREAS, Bishop Choby made the decision to enter the seminary during his first year at Aquinas Junior College and visited Bishop William Adrian to tell him of his decision; Bishop Adrian directed him to St. Ambrose College in Davenport, Iowa; reflecting upon that pivotal moment in his vocation, Bishop Choby remembers that as the train pulled out of Nashville headed for Davenport, "I was a nervous wreck, thinking, My God, what have I done"; and

WHEREAS, after graduating from Catholic University in 1973, Bishop Choby returned to Nashville where he served the next eighteen months as a deacon at St. Henry Parish; his experience "being among the people of St. Henry" was decisive in leading to his ordination; the final decision to become a priest, Bishop Choby said, was an act of faith that was aided by the "love, affection, and support of a lot of the people of the parish" he was ordained by Bishop Joseph Durick on September 6, 1974, at St. Henry; and

WHEREAS, the Diocese of Nashville is comprised of thirty-eight counties in middle Tennessee, including 75,000 Catholics in fifty-one parishes and three missions; Bishop Choby shepherds a large diocese of faith-filled people, and will work closely with them in fulfilling the mission of the Church; and

WHEREAS, Bishop Choby has been blessed with intelligence, courage, and wisdom, gifts that serve him well in the Episcopal life and ministry that he embraces; Bishop Kmiec, who has come to know him well, describes Bishop Choby, as “one endowed with wonderful qualities of priestliness and pastoral zeal, which he will now bring to his new office and ministry as Bishop of Nashville”; and

WHEREAS, mixing unflinching loyalty to the Catholic Church and its teachings with his uniquely personal touch, Bishop Choby epitomizes the spirit, compassion, and high level of commitment that are characteristic of true Tennesseans; and

WHEREAS, this General Assembly finds it appropriate to acknowledge and applaud this outstanding citizen for his dedication to the Roman Catholic Diocese of Nashville, the Catholic Church, and the citizens of the State of Tennessee; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor The Most Reverend David R. Choby, Bishop of Nashville, for his life's work and many years of devotion to the common good of the Church and its people. We join the many parishioners in the Diocese of Nashville in celebrating his recent ordination as Bishop, and we extend our best wishes for a happy and successful future as he fulfills the office and duties of Bishop of Nashville.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.